



Utah Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance

Guidance Activities Results Report (Large Group and Small Group) 2008-2009

School: Timpanogos High School

Target Group: Whole school

Target Group selection is based upon: Counseling goal to retain and graduate more students.

ABSTRACT

In harmony with the Desired Results for Student Learning (DRSL)---Competency, counselors will continue to improve the number of students who will be retained and successfully achieve graduation from high school.

As a result of our data projects from previous years, we determined our area of greatest need is to provide timely interventions in a systematic fashion. We realized that for some students waiting until their senior year to provide more time and support was too late. We hope that by intervening earlier in a student's high school experience, we may be able to reverse the current trend of a large percentage of our seniors starting deficient in credit. As part of our sophomore SEOP we have set the standard that we (at a minimum) expect all THS students to graduate and that the ultimate goal is to pursue further educational opportunities.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Our main goal was to create a Systematic Pyramid of Interventions for Timpanogos High School. Our goal for all students is to achieve their High School diploma, plus be prepared for career or educational opportunities.

As part of our SST this year, we are collectively reading *Whatever It Takes- How Professional Learning Communities Respond when Kids Don't Learn* by R. DuFour, R. DuFour, Eaker, and Karhanek. Based on best practices researched in this book we wanted our response to be:

1. **Intervention** based rather than remediation. The student's plan should include additional time and support for learning as soon as they experience difficulty rather than relying only on remediation after failure.
2. **Systematic.** We wanted to create a process that ensured we were responding to students according to a school wide plan rather than the discretion of a counselor, teacher or administrator.
3. **Timely.** We needed a system that would quickly be able to identify students who need additional time and support. How do we know when our students are not learning?
4. **Directive.** We insist students get extra help whenever there is evidence that our students are having difficulty learning.

We used the following criteria to analyze and define existing intervention courses:

- Course purpose
- Course content
- Class size
- Enrollment criteria
- Exit criteria

Based on our findings, we evaluated and redefined our criteria for current interventions. We also identified needs that were not being addressed by the current interventions and created new courses to address these needs.

We determined the data that we gathered must answer the following questions:

1. Who are the students who are not learning? **(Identify)**
2. Why are these students not learning? **(Assess)**
3. How are we going to help them? **(Intervene)**
4. How do we know if we are helping them? **(Monitor and Evaluate)**

We collected the following data for every student: **(Identify & Assess)**

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Grade | Most recent quarter/absences |
| Gender | Most recent quarter/GPA |
| Ethnicity | Basic Skills- Reading, Math & Writing scores |
| ESL service code | Lang. Art CRT from 8 th , 9 th , 10 th , & 11 th |
| ESL proficiency | grades |
| IEP status | Pre Algebra CRT |
| Cumulative GPA | Algebra CRT |
| Last year's GPA | Geometry CRT |
| Cumulative credit earned | 8 th Grade Iowa- Reading, Language Art, & |
| Cumulative credit attempted | Math |
| # of credits failed (or NCs) | DWA 9 th |
| Last year total absences | Composite ACT score |
| Last year total tardies | English ACT score |
| Year to date tardies | Math ACT score |
| Most recent quarter/tardies | |

All of the above data was already available in AS400, but had never been compiled into a user-friendly format. Two reports were created in Report Writer to collect all of the data points for every student. The reports are run each quarter and downloaded into an Excel workbook. The two reports are combined into one large spreadsheet. Once the spreadsheet is created, users can filter and sort the information to identify all students who meet specific criteria.

Based on the entrance criteria for each intervention class, we used the corresponding data to create an eligibility list for each course. Once we had a general eligibility list, we looked for students who qualified for multiple classes. After identifying these students, we collaborated as an SST team to determine best placement.

For example, to determine eligibility for the Guided Study Hall class, we used the following criteria to “sort” for eligible students.

- 2.5 or below GPA
- Grades 10 & 11
- Lang Art CRT scores of 3+
- < 20 absences

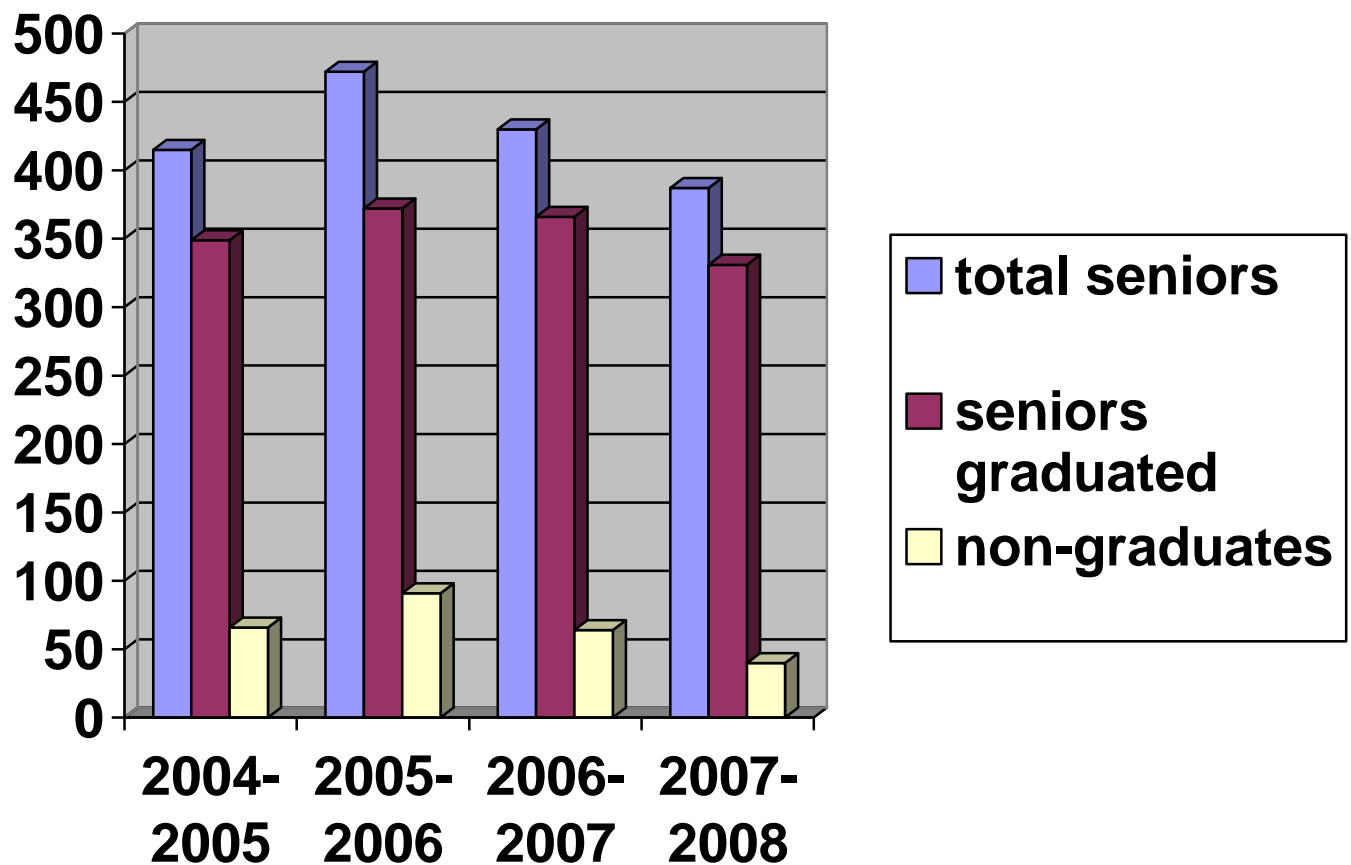
This “sort” allowed us to find our intentional non-learner as opposed to a “sort” for the tutorial classes which identifies our failed learners. An Algebra Tutorial sort consists of:

- Algebra 1 CRT scores of < 3
- current placement in Algebra 1 class
- 1st quarter math grades

We are able to create eligibility lists for any of our intervention classes based on narrowing our sort to the criteria listed for each course. (For a sample of each course, see attached.)

RESULTS

Timpanogos High School graduated approximately 5% more students for the school year 2006-2007 than the previous school year of 2005-2006, which was 5% higher per counselor. These numbers do not include those students who finished adult high school diplomas, THS diplomas within the year, or other alternative diplomas. As a result of this success, THS counselors chose to continue to improve retention and graduation statistics for the school year 2007-2008. Results for the school year 2008-2009 are pending.



DISCUSSION

Although the whole school is the focus for the large/small group project, the goal is still to graduate more students than in previous years, thereby reducing non-graduate numbers. Data not included in the posted statistics are the possible drop outs that occurred during the four years the current senior class has been together. Move in/move out student numbers have not been tracked at this time, as well.

THS counselors are confident that graduation statistics will continue to show improvement. More students are staying and finishing because of maintainable goals set with counselors; and, of those who will graduate after their senior class because of missing credit, more students have continued to work on credits and commit to an adult diploma or 24 credit district diploma than recorded in previous school years. It is hoped that as counselors refine the process of helping students stay in school, provide realistic goals for the students who struggle, and continue seeking and using new resources, non-graduating student numbers will be noticeably reduced in the coming school years.

One of the un-anticipated benefits of our efforts is the potential for affecting quality teaching in regular core classes by our regular teachers. As administrators and counselors have taken ownership of intervention classes, and become more aware of students' specific successes and failures, instruction is being improved. Grading practices which can lead students to give up after one failure, homework practices which are confusing, etc., have come to light because of administrative involvement in interventions. The importance of common curriculum, common pacing, and common assessments has become more obvious to departmental teams, and their collaboration efforts have become much more meaningful. Best practices within departments are being identified, and teachers whose students are not being as successful are being more effectively mentored.

We knew from the beginning that this process would be ongoing; it is not a data project that would start and end this year, but really more of a change to our system. In actuality, it has also been a paradigm shift, nurturing our collective belief as a school that all students can succeed. The process has a strong beginning, but will require ongoing refinement. One of the areas we see where the most refinement is needed is in teacher preparation for the intervention classes. Para-professionals are teaching many of these classes and we have to be realistic about their initial teaching skill level. They need common vision, better training, and professional development. We will do better in the future to provide the mentoring and support necessary for these teachers to be successful.

In addition to continual refinements for the system we have put into place, our next step will be to add to our pyramid of interventions a plan for additional time and support for all students during the regular school schedule. An altered schedule would provide an extended lunch period of students who are on track, allow for enrichment activities for advanced students, and require struggling students to receive extra help and re-teaching. Also, the intervention and progress check will be ongoing instead of a few times a year. There may be a whole new group of kids that we impact by giving the positive incentive. It will hopefully jog some students out of that cycle of procrastinating improvement until the next semester. When we implement this flex-time program, we will do it as a pilot program with these three benefits: 1) A privilege system (extended lunch) which will motivate all students, 2) struggling students receive extra help on a timely basis, and 3) students desiring

advanced learning activities can receive them during the regular school day (answering question 4: What do we do for students who already know it?)

Our collaborative effort as counselors and administrators has been powerful. Counselors provide encouragement and information to students and parents. Administrators pursue instructional improvements in every classroom. In the past, the mindset existed for many in our school that there will always be some students that will not learn and will not pass. Those students have been written off as a statistical reality. Our hope is to continue nurturing the cultural shift which has begun in our school, and work together believing that every student has the potential to achieve high school graduation and be ready for further educational opportunities.